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J. Front Retailing Co., Ltd. (JFR)

Precise, cloud-based Wi-Fi network management of 3,700 devices across 55 locations nationwide

Discover how AI-native networking can make every connection count

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From outdated Wi-Fi equipment to AI-native networking

J. Front Retailing Co., Ltd. (JFR), an established national chain of department stores, suffered from unstable Wi-Fi networks impacting thousands of devices at its stores and offices. With critical business functions such as in-store point-of-sale (POS) relying on the network, performance suffered, and network operations and management were difficult.

To address the issues, JFR replaced its wired and wireless networks across the entire group with access points (APs) and EX Series Switches from Mist™, Juniper's AI-native networking platform. This allowed JFR to build a high-performance network that allows for stable, scalable, simplified, and visualized network operations by its in-house IT team while also serving as the foundation for continued business expansion.

Overview

Slow and unstable connections, reliance on vendor to troubleshoot

With over 50 geographically separated locations, JFR must manage differing requirements and environments in each. It's prior Wi-Fi environment lacked network visibility and integrated management of the wired and wireless networks. Traffic management was also difficult, and essential POS traffic needed to be prioritized over other communications. As demands on the network increased, so did the frequency of slow performance, connectivity failures, and other issues.

Provided by Takenaka Corporation

JFR also relied on a system integrator to manage the previous network, and the difficulties of troubleshooting and resolving issues led to delays and increased costs. Further complications arose because the environment is different at each location.

To effectively digitalize the entire group going forward, JFR decided to not only upgrade the wireless and wired networks but also add IP phones that leverage the Wi-Fi. IT wanted to revamp the network to be able to visualize complex network communications and independently manage operations in an integrated manner.

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Solution and implementation

Advanced cloud-management of over 3000 APs and 700 switches

With numerous store and office locations, there is a significant amount of data to be analyzed for various business purposes. Hence, it is vital for JFR to visualize and understand traffic across its entire network infrastructure.

To address this, JFR replaced over 3,000 APs with Juniper Mist APs and 700 switches with Juniper EX Series Switches across Japan over the course of a year and a half. With Wired Assurance, they have introduced intuitive wired and wireless network management that provides strong visibility and requires fewer resources to enable efficient and stable operations.

Outcomes

Largest number of APs and switches deployed in one store	Number of APs deployed	Number of EX switches deployed
420+	**3,000+**	**700+**
Delivering robust Wi-Fi across a large department store	Renewal of all aging APs	Seamless wired and wireless integration and management

Juniper Wireless Access Points

Juniper Wireless (Wi-Fi) Assurance

Juniper EX Switches

Juniper Mist Wired Assurance

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Efficient visibility at scale with AI-native networking

With settings deployable from the cloud to each location and the ability to accommodate individual detailed requests, the introduction of Mist across JFR's locations in Japan went smoothly.

The large-scale Juniper network is operated by network staff at the JFR Information Center, alongside IT staff at each store. Together, they manage all network operations across each store, including POS, business terminals, IP phones, and free Wi-Fi access for customers.

Responses to inquiries have become faster and more accurate, with the integrated Juniper Mist AI management screen providing JFR with a comprehensive view and control over network infrastructure, including features such as user movements across large store floors and the ability to review past events functioning as a powerful investigation tool.

The importance of visualization

"All communications must be fully visible, perform satisfactorily, and even non-professionals must be able to understand the situation. Mist is the ideal solution for meeting these requirements. We also wanted to **integrate and manage both wired and wireless networks with minimal effort**, and Juniper enables this."

Tsutomu Nishimura, Manager
Group System Promotion Division, Digital Strategy Unit, J. FRONT RETAILING Co., Ltd.

Elevated, integrated experiences while reducing OpEx

JFR had initially planned to only upgrade its APs and PoE switches. However, the ability of Mist Wired Assurance to offer integrated visualization and management of both wired and wireless connections convinced JFR of the benefits of simultaneously upgrading its aging L2 switches across its wired LAN network to better enable continued business and network expansion.

Visualized, centralized management across wired and wireless networks

With the integration of not just APs but also EX switches, JFR was able to achieve integrated management across its entire LAN environment while reducing resources required.

Uplifted user experiences through in-house network management

By breaking a reliance on an external vendor having to manage and troubleshoot the prior network, JFR can now swiftly investigate and resolve issues in-house, allowing for quicker and more accurate response to user inquiries.

Building a strong network that expands business possibilities

With the implementation of Mist, JFR now has the major advantage of having a flexible network infrastructure that can better respond to future IT innovations and requirements proposed within the group.

A forward-looking network that empowers future innovation

By quickly responding to the use of Wi-Fi 6E in Japan and incorporating new functions such as indoor location information technology, JFR has implemented a forward-looking network with Mist that empowers future retail innovation.

The integrated and powerful management functions have provided strong visibility across JFR's network. For example, the availability of ongoing insights into the network status of connected devices allows for swifter troubleshooting, improving user experiences across JFR's premises.

With the support of Juniper Networks, who understood and enabled JFR's forward-looking vision for its network, the project was smoothly carried out across its premises in Japan smoothly and efficiently over a year and a half within the required project timeline.

More information

Learn more about Mist

To learn more about Mist, visit https://www.juniper.net/us/en/ai-native-networking-platform.html

For Juniper AI-native campus and branch solutions technical datasheets, guides, and documentation, visit https://www.juniper.net/us/en/campus-and-branch.html

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